



EPISCOPAL CHURCH of the  
**HEAVENLY REST**  
God's Love. For All

# *Lay Reader*

EPIPHANY • VOLUME 13, ISSUE 1 • ABILENE, TEXAS



## From The *Rector*



# Are you feeling “fresh” for the New Year?

– David Romanik

*O God our Creator, you have divided our life into days and seasons, and called us to acknowledge your providence year after year: Accept your people who come to offer their praises, and, in your mercy, receive their prayers; through Jesus Christ our Lord.. Amen.*

From the Service for New Year’s Eve in the Book of Occasional Services, pg. 72

On New Year’s Eve, as my spouse and I valiantly, but fruitlessly attempted to stay awake long enough to watch the ball drop in Times Square, we watched as a reporter sauntered up to the people gathered for the festivities and asked, “Are you feeling fresh for the new year?” It seemed an unfair question. These people had been waiting in Times Square in driving rain for nearly eight hours; how “fresh” could they possibly be expected to feel? Nevertheless, the respondents gamely proclaimed that they were feeling fresh, and, as a demonstration of this feeling, they sprayed breath spray in their mouths. As it turns out, the segment was sponsored by Listerine.

I’ve long found the celebration of the New Year to be something of a depressing, or at least melancholy enterprise. My sense is that I am not the only one to feel this way. I think part of the reason for this feeling is questions like the one asked of the revelers in Times Square: “are you feeling fresh for the new year?” This question presupposes that the change of the calendar is an opportunity for renewal, even transformation. The first of January is the day when many people resolve to start “fresh” with new diets, exercise regimens, or outlooks on life. People make these resolutions despite knowing there is a high likelihood that they will fail to keep them. It’s no wonder that people feel melancholy on New Year’s Day: there’s a lot of pressure to get things right, to make this new start count, to feel “fresh” for the new year.

The church calendar does not mark the “civic” new year with a particular celebration. Instead, we celebrate the Feast of the Holy Name, marking the moment when our Lord was circumcised eight days after his birth and given the name “Yeshua,” which means, “God saves.” It is the moment when we acknowledge that Jesus was born under the Law, even as we remember that he fulfilled and transformed the Law. Our faith teaches us that Jesus made it possible for all of us to become heirs of the promises of God, regardless of who we are, or where we come from, or what we have done. We all have the opportunity to put our trust in the renewing and transforming grace of God. What’s more, we can do this every single day. As the prophet writes, “the steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; God’s mercies never come to an end: they are new every morning.” We do not have to wait for the new year to renew our trust in God’s grace and love. We do not have to wait to think about inhabiting the world in a new way. We have only to put our trust in the mercy of God, a mercy that is “new every morning,” not just on January 1st.

***“We have only to put our trust in the mercy of God, a mercy that is “new every morning.”***

With all of this said, I will admit that I am looking forward to turning the page on 2024. This past year was a challenging one for our parish and our community. We endured some hardships, and were forced to confront some uncomfortable and unpleasant realities. At the same time, I have to acknowledge I am grateful for what we learned in 2024. Of course, there are some practical safeguards that we have put in place, and we are generally more mindful as a community. On a deeper level, however, part of what this year has helped me to recognize is that even the hard times can be a gift. Indeed, one of the primary tasks of the Church is to help us make sense of the time that has been given to us. It is the Church that provides the space to renew our trust, day by day, in God’s grace, mercy, and love.



*Members of Heavenly Rest at Diocesan Convention 2024*

## Nominees for Vestry and Diocesan Convention

The Nominating Committee convened late last year to nominate candidates to serve as members of the Vestry and delegates to Diocesan Convention. The Vestry is the governing body of the parish, and is responsible for supervising the parish budget, as well as discussing and making decisions about strategic priorities. Diocesan Convention meets annually to conduct the business of the Episcopal Diocese of Northwest Texas, of which Heavenly Rest is a part. Nominees will be up for election at the Annual Parish Meeting on February 2.

The following persons have been nominated for three year terms on Vestry: Kimberly Brumley, Dru Hall, and Mary Reyes. Harry Hurt has been nominated for a one year term. Four members of Vestry will be elected at the Annual Meeting. More information about these nominees may be found elsewhere in the Lay Reader.

The following persons have been nominated to serve as delegates to Diocesan Convention in October of 2025: Connie Collier, L'Nae Craig, Cheryl Holmes, Dustin Rainwater, Jay Moore, Meg Garcia, Bush Ramsey, Carol Ramsey, David Byerly, Amy Eddington, Sarah Martin, and Bijoux Mashauri. Eight delegates will be elected at the Annual Meeting. Those not elected will serve as alternates.

## A Prayer for the Parish

Almighty and everliving God, ruler of all things in heaven and earth, hear our prayers for this parish family. Strengthen the faithful, arouse the careless, and restore the penitent. Grant us all things necessary for our common life, and bring us all to be of one heart and mind within your holy Church; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



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## *Annual Meeting 2025*

On Sunday, February 2 at 12:00, the people of this parish will gather in the Nave for our Annual Meeting. This will be an opportunity to reflect on the past year, review the parish budget for 2025, and elect members of the Vestry and delegates to Diocesan Convention.

Activities will be provided for children. Lunch will be provided in Gerhart Hall following the meeting.

Please plan to join us for this time when we reflect on where we've been and look forward to the promises of the coming year.

## Vestry Nominees



**Kimberly Brumley (three year term)** - Kimberly Brumley and daughters Emily and Augusta joined the Abilene and Heavenly Rest community in the summer of 2017. Together the three of them are active in the acolyte ministry, where Kimberly serves as one of the acolyte mentors, or wranglers. She also contributes to parish life as a Lay Eucharistic Minister and member of the Family Ministries Committee. She occasionally offers her teaching talents when they are needed, and she has been known to join the choir as often as the demands of life allow. Her favorite thing about Heavenly Rest is our rich intergenerational commitment to fellowship and worship. Kimberly is a lifelong Texas educator nearing the end of a career made of opportunities to learn and lead not only in three school districts, but also in Girl Scouts of America and Rotary International. She's excited to see what God has in store for the next season of life and for the chance to serve Heavenly Rest as a Vestry member.



**Dru Hall (three year term)**- Dru Hall has been a member of Heavenly Rest since his marriage in 1981. During his time in the parish, he has mentored several generations of young people as both acolyte leader and Youth Director. He served in this latter capacity for nearly 14 years. Dru is a regular at the 8:00 service, where he sits just behind one of the columns to ensure that the church is staying upright! He is a proud Abilene High Eagle, and has worked in the Petroleum Equipment business for over 35 years. Dru is married to Franklynn, with whom he has two adult children: Jakeb and Jenna. Dru's 11 year old granddaughter Kennedy often joins him for worship at Heavenly Rest.

Dru is grateful for the opportunity to serve the parish he loves.



**Harry Hurt (one year term)** - Harry Hurt and his wife Debbie moved to Abilene in 2018 from Maryland, having been members of St. John's in Ellicott City. He received his doctorate in Materials Science from USC and spent the next 20 years doing weapons development and testing for the US Navy at China Lake and at the Office of Naval Research. Leaving government service in 2000, Harry joined the staff at Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory where, in a distinguished career, he led high technology programs supporting the nation's warfighters. Tired of commuting to DC from Abilene, Harry finally retired in 2020 and is now living a much less stressful existence. Activities include running the cotton farm in Big Spring, taking Zoey the therapy dog to nursing facilities including the monthly visits by the Church to Lyndale and musical activities - mainly Renaissance performance on the Viola da Gamba. Harry and Debbie are very active at Heavenly Rest and have been very proactive in getting proper medical attention for adults and children from the afternoon congregation. They have 5 godchildren from the group with one more in queue.

*Harry has served as Junior Warden for the past two years, and the Vestry intends for him to continue in that role in 2025.*





**Mary Reyes (three year term)** - Mary Reyes came to Heavenly Rest in 1996. She was raised Catholic and grew up in Roscoe, TX. After discovering the Episcopal Church she realized she'd been Episcopalian at heart all her life. As of January of 2025, she will have been here 29 years. Mary has worked as a project manager and interior designer, first for 11 years at Abilene Christian University and now for the last 13 years as an Interiors Manager for Hendrick Health System. She has three adult children: two sons (BJ and Thomas Madrid), and a daughter (Madison Ryals), that she raised as a single parent in Abilene. She enjoys time with her grandchildren: three grandsons and a granddaughter. Mary's involvement at Heavenly Rest has included Children's Sunday School, Buildings and Grounds Committee, and Altar Guild. She has served as the class registrar for Exploring Spiritual Treasure for the last nine years, and her favorite part of that ministry is getting to know all our newest members. She is also a graduate of Education for Ministry (EfM). Her community involvement has included serving on the boards of Hendrick Home for Children, United Way, and FaithWorks of Abilene. She has also served as a delegate to Diocesan Convention, and is always proud to tell others that she is a member of Heavenly Rest. She is honored and humbled by this nomination to serve on the Vestry.

## Caroling at Lyndale

What a wonderful time we had caroling at the Lyndale Memory Care Unit! Our parish family spread the joy of the season with songs and smiles, creating a special worship experience for everyone involved. You are invited to join us for worship at the Lyndale Memory Care Unit on the fourth Sunday of every month at 2:00 p.m. All are welcome, and children are especially encouraged to attend! For more information, please contact Mother Karen Boyd at [kboyd@heavenlyrestabilene.org](mailto:kboyd@heavenlyrestabilene.org).







## Twelfth Night and Eve of the Epiphany

– Amanda Watson

These days, we celebrate Christmas from Thanksgiving until Christmas Day, December 25th. It is a month of preparing, shopping, cleaning, wrapping, and cooking, all in anticipation of celebrating in a most glorious way, THE Day, Christmas. After we open all the presents, eat all the turkey, and throw all the wrappings in the trash, we sit and say, “What a great day!” It is a glorious ending to a wonderfully busy time. Yet, “what exactly did we celebrate?” Thankfully, the church offers the opportunity to spend time with the majesty of our God, time to dwell in the miracles of God, our God who is love, and we celebrate! We give thanks “that God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life.” For 12 wonder-filled days, we celebrate the hope, peace, joy, and love that has come into the world, Jesus. “He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High.” A celebration worthy to be concluded in most holy worship, singing, sumptuous food, and great joy!

On January 5th, The Episcopal Church of the Heavenly Rest celebrated the sending of God’s Son and, as seen through the coming of the magi, the manifestation of the Son, Jesus Christ, to the Gentiles.

We celebrated the abundance of our God with the Twelfth Night Feaste and the Eve of the Epiphany. The evening of celebration began with the Holy Eucharist at 5:30 pm in the nave--always first giving thanks to our loving God. At about 6:30 pm, the pipers led us down a luminaria-lined sidewalk to the Meander Street entrance to Gerhart Hall, which magically became the Great Hall, festooned with the glorious light of a wide assortment of lanterns, a reminder of the light that has come into the world. Family and friends gathered full of love and joy. And then the “feaste” began! After a decree by the Lord of the Feaste, some singing, and the blessing of the Feaste, a sumptuous meal was served, surrounded by the sweet, silvery sounds of a string quartet and, finally, the Chalking of the Doors. The writing with chalk of the letters and numbers 20+C+B+M+25 on our doors is to welcome all who enter our homes. The letters represent the three magi, the numbers the year, and the “+” is the blessing of Jesus Christ. It offers hospitality to all who enter and leave our home, just as Mary welcomed the magi to that humble abode.

What an evening! What a blessing! What a celebration – Christ, our Savior, is born this day!



# Heavenly Neighbors

Almost every Sunday, immediately following the Collect for Purity, we hear these words: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.” And that is why we are Heavenly Neighbors!

This year, we began to ask ourselves, “How can we truly be neighbors? How do we come into a relationship with those around us? We start by being among our neighbors. During the summer months, we offered ‘Tower Tales,’ inviting the neighborhood children to sit in the grass of the east lawn, have fun, eat some popcorn, drink some cool water, and listen to the reading of storybooks. Amazingly, families walked by and then returned to sit and listen! At the end of October, we made Heavenly Rest available for trick or treating. We opened our playground and our parking lot, and offered cool water and bathrooms. Most importantly, we opened our car trunks to hand out candy and good stuff like erasers and funny sayings on pins. Wonderfully, as the children played, the adults spent time relaxing, laughing, and talking. And as we closed those welcoming trunks, we invited everyone to a liturgy in the columbarium, the Service for All Hallows’ Eve, a time to stop and remember. What a night! We are one!

To continue our pursuit of this oneness, the Heavenly Neighbors will continue to plan events in which we can be a place of gathering, a place where neighbors spend time with neighbors. With the coming of the darkness, let us offer the lights of Gerhart Hall. As the cold comes, let us offer the warmth of a steaming pot of soup. Most of all, let us each be a light that reveals our God, who sent his Son to welcome all into his kingdom!

We invite you to join us and meet our neighbors. There are wonderful stories in the very midst of this lovely

## *Snapshots of Trunk or Treat*







## Music News

– Thomas Pavlechko, Organist & Director of Music

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### Chamber Music Concert Series, Spring 2025

*We will be continuing our Chamber Music Concert Series with the same traditions that we have had in the past. We look forward to hearing local as well as visiting musicians!*

**Saturday, March 1, 7:30 p.m.**  
**Susie Rockett, Oboe & English Horn**  
**Becca Zeisler, Piano**

**Saturday, March 22, 7:00 p.m.**  
**Shalesia Brown, Soprano**  
**Abigail Payne, Piano**

**Sunday, March 30, 6:00 p.m.**  
**Alison Read, Harp**

**Tuesday, April 29, 7:00 p.m.**  
**Chorus Abilene's BackBeat**  
**Seraya Peters, Conductor**

**Sunday, May 4, 6:00 p.m.**  
**David Amlung, Trumpet**  
**Thomas Pavlechko, Organ**

**Sunday, May 18, 6:00 p.m.**  
**Organ Demo(nstration) before the Organ Demo(lition)!**  
**Thomas Pavlechko, Organist**

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### *A Prayer for Church Musicians and Artists*

O God, whom saints and angels delight to worship in heaven: Be ever present with your servants who seek through art and music to perfect the praises offered by your people on earth; and grant to them even now glimpses of your beauty, and make them worthy at length to behold it unveiled for evermore; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Book of Common Prayer 1979, pg. 819



# The Heavenly Rest Organ Project

I am excited to share information about our upcoming Organ Project!



Ernest M. Skinner Organs and Aeolian-Skinner Organs are in major churches, cathedrals and music halls throughout the United States. Their installations began in the early 1900's. Skinner merged with Aeolian in the early 1930's. While major changes started taking place in the tonal aspects, many of the organs of this period had the benefit of both the original voicing and improved voicing. However, moving through three more decades of changing tastes in organ building was taking that original warm sound away.

These ill-advised changes came about through what was known as the "Organ Reform Movement." When our Heavenly Rest organ was built in 1963, some of that influence had been embraced by the new leaders of Aeolian-Skinner. To make matters worse, in 1987, another company made changes to our instrument, leaning even further in that direction, creating pipework that has turned out to be unusable due to being too loud, too bright and lacking tuning stability.

I am very familiar with the E. M. Skinner/Aeolian Skinner organ history, having overseen the beginning of the restoration of the 1923 E. M. Skinner organ at a church in Virginia, and the restoration/rebuilding of half of the 1935 Aeolian-Skinner organ at a church in Memphis. The Memphis organ had also undergone some unfortunate changes by another company, much like Heavenly Rest did, changing the pipe voicing from the classic sounds of its original. Changing the voicing back had a huge positive impact on all aspects of music at the church.

Our goal in this current Heavenly Rest organ project is to bring the sound of the organ back to earlier Aeolian-Skinner ideal, complementing the Anglican tradition by being flexibly voiced for choir accompaniment, congregational singing leadership, and organ repertoire.

Here is a project schedule update from Charles Kegg of Kegg Pipe Organs:

The Heavenly Rest Organ Project design/drawing phase is already in progress and is expected to be completed soon. Construction of new parts in the shop begins this month. The new wind chests and organ console will be first to be built, with support structures and expression enclosures following. All the sections will be assembled and completed in the shop so that installation is simply reassembly. The aim is for as little on-site construction as possible. They will travel here sometime late next summer to remove the organ parts that are to be replaced or rebuilt. That is when the organ will not be playable for a few months prior to completion, during which time we will use our Rodger's electronic organ. Also during this time, the rear space of the nave will be prepared by local construction for the antiphonal organ pipes which will be added to play from the back. The full installation will begin in October and be completed in November.





## **Wednesday Night Programing**

Wednesday Nights are a time to wind down and enjoy great music, food (prepared by Robert and Crew), conversation, and presentations for both adults and children. Speaking of Presentations, January is exciting—don't miss it!

**January 8**—The New Year is a time to celebrate good friends, present and new. God creates humans who are distinctive and individual. Let us celebrate those stories that reveal that special, one-of-a-kind person that we are.

### **Heavenly Arts Series**

**On January 15**, we begin with our Heavenly Architecture. Father David will lead a tour of the Nave, illuminating some of the hidden stories that are foundational to this place. Join us as we explore the gift bestowed on us by our forebears and consider the ways it continues to transform our lives today.

**On January 22**, we continue with Heavenly Art. H. C. Zachry will offer a personal reflection on his painting of Heavenly Rest, which he generously gifted to the church. Mr. Zachry is hugely talented and respected as a painter. His insights into his painting, specifically this perspective of Heavenly Rest, will be a wonderful gift in itself.

**On January 29**, our last in this series will be Heavenly Music. Brene Brown, author, wrote about her spiritual transformation as a result of listening to a musical interpretation of the hymn Amazing Grace. Darryl Tippens will open the poetry of the hymn and share his particularly powerful musical presentation of the hymn. And, of course, there will be singing of this most familiar hymn.

Wednesday nights at Heavenly Rest are not just another Wednesday; they are HEAVENLY!!



## **Wednesday Night Programs for Children**

– Carol Ann

Children in Kindergarten through 5th Grade move upstairs in the Parish House after dinner with Carol Ann and Lynette Tatum. (Childcare is provided for younger children.)

**January 8 – Birthday Celebration** - a night for all ages to join in Gerhart Hall to celebrate our birthdays and enjoy some lively conversation.

**January 15 - Heavenly Arts.** We will share scriptures from the Old and New Testaments about God's artwork and then create our own art.

**January 22 - Heavenly Architecture** – we will join the adults, but the children will have pictures to use in leading us on a scavenger hunt to find the stops on our Tour of the Nave with Father David.

**January 29 - Heavenly Music** - children will create their own tune and add words as we think about expressing ourselves to God through music and using various instruments.

**February 5, 12, & 26 – Black History Month** - During Black History Month, we will hear stories of some “People of Color Who Inspire”: Harriet Tubman, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Pauli Murray.

**February 19 – Spaghetti Supper Fundraiser** – after dinner, children will work on this year's Alleluia Banner and enjoy some play.

Come Join Us!!



# What a Wonderful Christmas Pageant!

Thank you to our youth narrators, older children and youth leaders, and the many adults who helped characters get dressed and in place and led them in singing, enabling all who were present to enter into the timeless story of the birth of Christ. Special thanks to Harry Hurt for the photos. (photos from Harry)





Follow us online!  
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**THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH**

The Most Reverend Sean Rowe, *Presiding Bishop*

**THE DIOCESE OF NORTHWEST TEXAS**

The Right Reverend J. Scott Mayer, *Bishop*

**PARISH STAFF**

The Reverend David Romanik, *Rector*

The Reverend Amanda Watson, *Assistant Rector for Community Life*

The Reverend Karen Boyd, *Assisting Priest*

The Reverend Doug Thomas, *Priest in Residence*

The Reverend Dr. Russell Dickerson, *Deacon*

Bikole Mulanda, *Swahili Minister*

Thomas Pavlechko, *Organist and Director of Music*

Shelly Reed, *Music Assistant, Choristers*

Laura Dickson, *Music Assistant, Children's Choir*

Carol Ann Weston, *Director of Children & Family Ministries*

Luke Mendez, *Coordinator for Youth and Young Adult Ministries*

Steve Gibbs, *Parish Coordinator*

Donna Marcy, *Parish Bookkeeper*

Melody Brown, *Website Manager*

Austin Hackel, *Communications Coordinator*

Robert Becerra, *Sexton*

Brandon Martin, *Assistant Sexton*

Dorothy Guerra, *Housekeeper*

Anne Jones, *Nursery Manager*

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